



**Representative  
Velma Veloria**

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Capital Budget  
Criminal Justice & Corrections

## **State Representative Velma Veloria**

# **Report to the 11th District**

Dear Neighbor:

While short, this year's 60-day session of the legislature was still somewhat sweet and filled with many accomplishments.

Going into the session we looked to continue to: build a strong, diverse economy; foster our shared futures by working to have the best educational system; and pass a supplemental budget that puts ordinary people first. Although we still have a great deal of work to do, we covered a lot of ground during this session.

Thank you to everyone who took time to answer the survey in my last newsletter. The majority of you said:

- A good education is the surest way to land a solid job, and schools deserve more funding.
- Workforce training programs should be increased to make sure our workers have the skills that match employers' needs.
- Keeping people who are disabled in their own homes is a good way to help them stay independent and close to their families.
- Federal funds should be leveraged to decrease health insurance premiums for children of lower-income working families.

In this update, you will find that we made progress on all these issues.

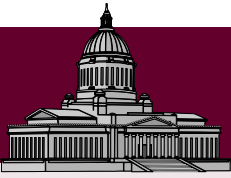
As always, thank you for the opportunity to represent you in our state government. Please stay in touch by calling, e-mailing, or writing me. Thank you for your continued interest and involvement in building many brighter shared tomorrows for our community.

Sincerely,

*Velma Veloria*

Velma Veloria  
State Representative  
11<sup>th</sup> Legislative District





# State Representative **Velma Veloria**

## **Investments in education pay dividends to our state economy**

Investing in education is vital for families to make a good living and for our overall economy.

### **WASL Improvements**

We want to test students on what they know, not how well they do on tests. In 2008, students will have to pass the WASL in order to graduate high school. Legislation we passed this session will allow them to retake the test up to four times.



### **Higher Education**

A good education is the key to a good job, and no bright, hard-working student should be denied the opportunity to go to college because of a lack of funds.

- We gave our colleges and universities an additional \$10 million to increase general enrollments.
- We also provided an additional \$7.1 million for new enrollments in order to fill jobs already available in health care, biotechnology, and high-tech industries.
- Financial aid for students was increased by \$6.8 million.



### **Feeding Hungry Children**

Students have difficulty learning when their stomachs are empty. We expanded the school lunch program and made it easier for lower-income families to get food stamps.

## **Creating good-paying jobs with benefits builds vibrant communities**

As the Chair of the House Trade and Economic Development Committee, I spent most of my time this session looking for ways to improve the climate for small businesses and increase training for workers.

acquire additional land to expand their existing training programs and meet a growing demand from local businesses for skilled workers in transportation, construction, aerospace, and manufacturing industries.



*Rep. Veloria and other supporters of the Duwamish Training Center with Governor Gary Locke as he signs HB 3045, allowing the center to expand.*

### **Duwamish Training Center**

Vocational and apprenticeship training are a cost-effective way to give workers the necessary skills to land good-paying jobs with benefits. Students who complete these programs earn over \$50, 500 a year, on average. I led the fight to pass legislation that will allow the Duwamish Training Center

Incubator Program we passed this year will help start-up and existing small businesses located in economically distressed areas realize success. Business incubators have a solid record of driving job growth, and more than 80% of businesses working with incubator programs survive beyond the first five years in business.

### **Health Care for Small Business Employees**

It is essential that small businesses are able to afford to provide health care coverage for their employees. We passed a bill that will allow businesses with fewer than 50 employees to offer health care plans that don't include everything usually required by state law – helping to make coverage more affordable.

### **Small Business Support**

Employing roughly 60 percent of our workforce, small businesses are the backbone of our state's economy. They also need our support. The Small Business

# Report to the 11th District

## Increasing access to health care keeps families and the economy healthy



Access to affordable health care is crucial for people of all ages. We can't expect children to do well in school when they are ill, and seniors and people with disabilities remain healthier and happier when they can receive care in their own homes.

### Health Care Premiums

The supplemental budget we passed

this year eliminated premiums for children on Medicaid if their families earn less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level. I will continue working to eliminate the premiums for ALL poor children.

### Home Care Workers

The 26,000 home care workers in Washington state will be seeing a modest pay increase and begin receiving health care benefits this year. These hard-working individuals help to keep seniors and people with disabilities in their own homes, allowing them to remain close to family, maintain some independence, and save the state the high cost of a nursing home.

## Passing a supplemental budget that doesn't pass on ordinary people



Following the worst budget year in recent memory, this year brought a little better economic news. Therefore, we were able to make some investments that will make a difference in the lives of ordinary people.

### Community Safety

\$245,000 in new funding is provided to cover mitigation costs for the sex offender half-way house located in south Seattle. The funding will pay for:

- Additional training for law enforcement officers.
- Utility costs for improved lighting.
- An additional detective at the Seattle Police Department.
- Victims' counseling.
- Meeting costs for meetings for the advisory committee.

### Help for the uninsured

- Hospitals receive an additional \$16.6 million so they can continue to serve patients with no medical coverage.
- Community health clinics receive an additional \$2.5 million.

### Increasing Opportunities

Solid English language skills are important for many immigrants and refugees trying to get a good job.

- Funding is provided for the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathways program which offers employment services – including training in work-place English, job placement assistance, and work support services.

## Building the necessary infrastructure to build our economy

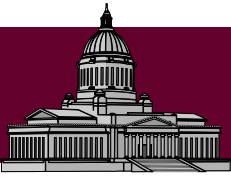


### Capital Budget

The capital budget supports building infrastructure vital to the future of our state. Nothing could be more important to our future than our institutions of learning. This year's capital budget includes money to help the South Seattle Community College Training Center expand its facilities. Also included is funding to build new K-12 schools and enhance college campuses throughout the state.

### Transportation Budget

This year's supplemental transportation budget helps to fund freight mobility projects that are key to keeping our state's goods and economy moving. It also clears the way for funding special needs transportation, adds \$1 million for Safe Routes to Schools, and dedicates \$500,000 to Flexcar, the popular car-sharing program.



# *State Representative* **Velma Veloria**

## **Getting Involved in Government**



Every year, lawmakers make decisions that will impact future generations. Students should take an active interest in their state government. There is no better way to learn about the legislature than to serve as a page or spend time as an intern. The House page and internship programs are educational, rewarding, and exciting.

Students who are at least 14 years old but not yet 17 are invited to apply for the page program. College undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to apply for the legislative internship program.

If you are interested in either program, please contact my office or log onto the following websites for further information:

**Page program:** <http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/hadm/pageprog.htm>

**Internship program:** <http://www.leg.wa.gov/common/interns/>

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